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LETTER DATED 7 JULY 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 5 July 1998 from Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, containing details of violations of Iraq's airspace and acts of aggression and provocation carried out by United States and British aircraft in flagrant contravention of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 5 July 1998 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the President of the Security Council

I refer to our letter dated 18 January 1998 providing details of violations and acts of aggression carried out by United States and other States' aircraft and naval vessels during the period 1 July to 31 December 1997.

In the present letter, I wish to call your attention to the fact that between 1 January and 30 June 1997 there were 11,162 violations of the Republic of Iraq's airspace in the south by aircraft coming from bases in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and 1,672 violations of its airspace in the north by aircraft coming from bases in Turkey. The number of violations of Iraq's airspace during this period was thus 12,834.

In committing these violations, the aircraft involved carried out such acts of aggression, provocation and incitement as dropping heat flares and breaking the sound barrier over Iraqi civilian areas and installations. United States warships also engaged in acts of aggression inside and outside Iraqi territorial waters that were documented and communicated by us to the United Nations Secretariat at the time they took place. They included those set forth as follows.

1. At 1210 and 1235 hours on 1 February 1998 and at 1155 and 1205 hours on 3 February 1998 United States aircraft violated Iraq's airspace over the area of Umm Qasr and Faw.

2. At 2238 hours on 8 February 1998 a formation of United States aircraft dropped three illumination flares over the area to the north of Shu'aybah.

3. At 1600 hours on 18 February 1998 a formation of six United States aircraft broke the sound barrier over the area to the north of Artawi in southern Iraq.

4. At 1016, 1030 and 1105 hours on 2 March 1998 United States aircraft violated Iraq's airspace over Umm Qasr and Faw.

5. At 1128 hours on 2 March 1998 a formation of two United States aircraft broke the sound barrier over the town of Shu'aybah.

6. At 1100 hours on 9 April 1998 the Iraqi mechanized barge No. 1 was subjected to an inspection by an armed vessel carrying 25 officers of the United States Coast Guard. An exhaustive search was carried out under armed threat.

7. At 0030 hours on 23 April 1998 a United States military helicopter lowered a rubber boat with seven armed men on board close to the Iraqi naval vessel Al-Bakr. The men then proceeded to search the vessel which was at the mouth of the Khawr Abdullah waterway.

8. On 8 May 1998 three United States military helicopters hovered over the ship Chettinad Princed, registered in Pakistan, which was carrying a cargo of wheat, under the Memorandum of Understanding. While it was in Khawr 'Abdullah the pilot was instructed to return to sea in order to undergo an inspection. The vessel's papers were inspected in what constituted an act of provocation.

9. At 1208 hours on 27 May 1998 a formation of two United States aircraft dropped heat flares over the area of Mithanna in Ninawa province.

10. At 1100 hours on 1 July 1998 a formation of two United States warplanes broke the sound barrier on two consecutive occasions over the town of Tall Afar in the province of Ninawa in northern Iraq.

11. At 1320 hours on the same day a formation of two United States warplanes broke the sound barrier over the town of Taklil in the province of Ninawa in northern Iraq flying at speeds that caused damage to buildings.

12. At 1912 hours on 1 June 1998 a United States warplane dropped three heat flares over the area of the Saddam Dam in the province of Ninawa.

13. At 0930 hours on 30 June 1998 a United States F16 aircraft launched a HARM missile at a complex of water storage tanks 12 kilometres to the north of Umm Qasr in the southern part of the province of Basra inside the demilitarized zone.

We condemn these repeated acts of aggression and provocation carried out by the United States, the United Kingdom and others against Iraqi targets and civilian installations. We further condemn the actions of the United States F16 aircraft on 30 June 1998, which the United States claimed had launched a missile against an Iraqi radar station. The United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) confirmed that the incident in question had in fact taken place inside the demilitarized zone, where there were no Iraqi military units or equipment of any kind. The Observation Mission recorded the incident as a violation on the part of the United States. UNIKOM inspectors and representatives of well-known news agencies verified the accuracy of Iraq's claims and the falsehood of the United States allegations. We urge you to intervene with the United States and the United Kingdom with a view to putting a halt to these repeated and unjustified acts of aggression that not only constitute grave violations on the part of permanent members of the Security Council of the sovereignty of an independent State and a founding Member of the United Nations as well as of the Charter of the United Nations but also represent a breach of the principle enunciated in Security Council resolution 687 (1991).

The countries whose aircraft and ships engage in these acts of aggression and those in which the aircraft are based bear full responsibility for these actions, for the damage they have caused and for the security, economic and moral threats they have posed to the people of the Republic of Iraq.

We also affirm the legally established right of the Republic of Iraq, in accordance with the principle of State responsibility, to seek compensation for the damage it has sustained through acts of aggression that are in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of public international law.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Iraq

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